

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested. Claims 2 and 4 have been canceled. New claims 5-8 have been added. Claims 1, 3 and 5-8 are now pending in the application. The rejections are respectfully submitted to be obviated in view of the amendments and remarks presented herein.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants submit that a Supplemental IDS was filed on January 30, 2006, which corrects the alleged noncomplying information and also properly lists all disclosed references. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to consider the listed references.

Objection to the Drawings

Applicants have amended the specification on page 23, line 23 to page 24, line 1, to append the omitted label description (112). Thus, withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

Objection to the Specification

The disclosure has been objected to for alleged informalities. Applicants have amended the specification on page 14, line 26 to page 15, line 19, to correct the label for the multiplexer (34c). Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) - Karellas in view of Imai

Claims 1 and 3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being anticipated by Karellas (U.S. Patent Number 5,864,146) in view of Imai (U.S. Patent Number 6,376,857). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding independent claim 1, an exemplary embodiment of the claimed invention relates to a breast image obtaining method. The breast image obtaining method comprises:

imaging a breast image of a subject by irradiating the radioactive rays passed through the breast on said solid-state detector; and
reading out said breast image by mechanically scanning said detector with said reading light, and generating said electric current,
wherein said imaging is performed after said detector is moved inside the housing to a place close to the chest wall of the subject, and said reading is performed after said detector is moved inside the housing to a place remote from the chest wall of the subject.

In rejecting claim 1, the Examiner alleges that Karellas in view of Imai discloses all of the elements of the claimed invention.

Karellas discloses a radiographic imaging device as shown in Figures 30, 31A and 31B. However, the detectors (902 and 904) in Karellas are only translated from a digest position to a second position in the process of imaging and analyzing regions (934 and 936) (column 29, lines 41-46). This movement of the detectors (902 and 904) does not teach or suggest the claimed invention, in which imaging of a breast image is performed *after said detector is moved inside the housing to a place close to the chest wall of the subject*. Karellas's movement of detectors towards or away from the chest wall is only performed to provide a full image of the compressed breast (925), and there is no teaching or suggestion that imaging is performed specifically after the detector is moved inside the housing to a place close to the chest wall, as claimed.

Furthermore, as admitted by the Examiner, Karellas also fails to teach or suggest that reading out said breast image by mechanically scanning said detector with said reading light, and generating said electric current is performed after said detector is moved inside the housing to a place remote from the chest wall of the subject.

Imai does not remedy these deficiencies of Karellas. Although Imai teaches a read-out apparatus for an image detector, Imai's read-out apparatus (70) is only disclosed to slide a light shutter (81) when the detector casing (80) has been accommodated in the detector receiving section (77). In this state, Imai's interface section (79) of the read-out apparatus (70) and the interface section (82) of the detector casing (80) are connected to each other, the image detector (10) and the read-out apparatus (70) are electrically connected, and a readout is performed (column 17, lines 40-65).

However, Imai also does not teach or suggest any performing of imaging after moving of the detector inside the housing to a place close to the chest wall, and performing of reading after the detector is moved inside the housing to a place remote from the chest wall of the subject, as recited by claim 1. Imai merely performs readout after sliding the light shutter (81) and connecting the read-out apparatus (70) with the detector casing (80) and electrically connecting the image detector (10) and the read-out apparatus (70). Imai does not move the detector to places close to or remote from the chest wall whereby imaging and reading out are thus performed, as claimed. At least by virtue of the aforementioned differences, the claimed invention as recited by claim 1 is distinguished over Karellas in view of Imai.

Regarding independent claim 3, a breast image obtaining apparatus comprises a solid-state detector, a reading light scanning means, a housing, and a moving means. The apparatus is configured to pick up a breast image by irradiating radioactive rays passed through the breast on said detector at a place close to the chest wall of a subject, and read out said breast image by mechanically scanning said detector with said reading light scanning means, and generating said electric current at a place remote from the chest wall of the subject” (emphasis added).

As discussed above, Karellas in view of Imai fails to teach or suggest a configuration such that the apparatus picks up a breast image by irradiating radioactive rays passed through the breast on the detector at a place close to the chest wall of the subject, and further read out the breast image by mechanically scanning the detector with the reading light scanning means and generating the electric current at a place remote from the chest wall of the subject.

Neither Karellas nor Imai teach or suggest picking up or reading out the breast image after the detector has moved to the specific locations, as claimed. At least by virtue of the aforementioned differences, the claimed invention as recited by claim 1 is distinguished over Karellas in view of Imai.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are respectfully requested.

Newly Added Claims

New claims 5-8 have been added by this Amendment, in order to more fully recite exemplary embodiments of the present invention. Support for these new claims is found in the specification on at least page 19, line 24 to page 20, line 22.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
US Application No. 10/665,150
Attorney Docket No. Q77559

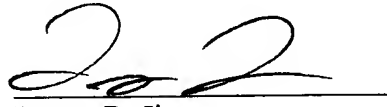
Art Unit No. 2884

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


Lenny R. Jiang
Registration No. 52,432

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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